

Abilene Public Library

2017



ANNUAL REPORT

Year of New Beginnings



NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

FY2017



511,508
patron visits



6,801
new library cards registered



91,610
public computer users



815,892
items circulated



122,747
ebooks & digital downloads



66,626
reference questions
answered



54,846
program attendance



3,002
volunteer hours donated

LORI GRUMET,

LIBRARY DIRECTOR

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2017 began for us with South Branch exceeding all expectations in terms of popularity with the public as they broke attendance thresholds each month through June. The numbers are still strong, and we are so gratified that our choices, services, and amenities are in demand.

At the Main Library we have opened the Creation Station, a small workroom for creative activities, including a 3-D printer, sewing machines, a Cricut and Sizzix, laminator, and much more. We also developed a study room with the help of Workforce who partnered with us on a grant that furnished the room with a large screen display and training desk.

Our Genealogy and Texas collections also had considerable attention and some re-arranging to make them easier for you to use and to provide a more spacious study area. Staff has painted some areas to make the space more appealing and the adjustments to our computer lab will make it more convenient for patrons to use.

We have launched a job help center at Mockingbird Branch and filled it with resources to assist you with a job search, preparing a resume and cover letter, and honing your other job-related skills. We also have a significant number of databases on our website to assist with skill development in many other areas. I invite you to check out the resources.

Last year I told you we would be working hard to keep our numbers trending up. We have done that with your help noting a significant increase in the use of digital resources. Attendance numbers broke the 500,000 mark this year and the numbers tell us that we are meeting many of your library needs.

Thank you to our Friends, our Advisory Board, City Administration, and most of all to you, our patrons, for making the Abilene Public Library a wonderful community resource.



The South Branch Library opened in the Mall of Abilene on November 19, 2016 to an opening day crowd of more than 4,000 people who showed their support for this new facility on the south side of Abilene.

FY 2017 BY THE NUMBERS

- **270,923** Visits (197% increase Over FY 2016)
- **659** Events & Programs Conducted
- **28,431** Program Attendance

This larger space allowed for the inclusion of several new features & services such as being open seven days a week (including most holidays), a quiet reading room, three study rooms, a designated teen room, meeting room, and more. The public has responded well to these features and the presence of the meeting room has been in high demand by the community and local organizations.

Technology has also been highly utilized this past year with the use of many televisions for programming and promoting library services & events, audio/visual equipment for filming, and more. Even a green screen is available for use in various programming and filming endeavors.

Programming is now offered for all ages with expanded activities for youth, teens, and adults. We have at least one program for kids every weekday, with new activities including Music & Movement, Lego clubs, after hours events, coloring clubs, movie showings, and more. Plus, there are plans to offer more in the future. With the new space available, the sky's the limit to what we may offer.

A new location even meant the ability to form new partnerships in the community. A regular storytime is hosted in Chick-fil-A in the Mall of Abilene, and in return,

***Great facility and friendly and helpful staff!
I really love the design and décor! The
convenience of having the library available in the
mall is wonderful! I look forward to being able
to enjoy this branch for many years to come!***

- REBBECA HUFF -

the business offered free treats to kids who attend Preschool Storytime every Wednesday at the South Branch Library. This included additional incentives for participation in the Summer Reading Club. Additional partnerships extended through the West Texas Fair and Rodeo, the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council, the Military Child Education Coalition's monthly storytime and parenting workshops, tours & group visits from schools, and more.

The Summer Reading Clubs also led to a booming year as we hosted 128 programs with more than 6,000 participants. Summer draws included the weekly Disney Flix & Crafts, Summer STEM Challenges inside the Mall, a Who I Could Be! series for youth featuring a wide range of local professionals, and adult workshops.

We are still planning the future of the South Branch Library, but based on the first year, we are off to an incredible start. We've been so excited by the opportunities afforded to us in this new space and hope to continue to grow and change to meet the needs of the Abilene community.

ALYSSA CROW,
SOUTH BRANCH MANAGER

The Creation Station

One of the premier features this year development of a new makerspace at the Main Library. Makerspaces are community work areas where the public is encouraged to utilize a variety of equipment and tools to create a number of projects.



The new makerspace was named The Creation Station and opened to the public in October 2017. The hours of operation are Mon. through Fri. from 2-5PM (extended hours on Tuesday until 9PM), and the room offers:

- **PolyPrinter (3D Printer):** fees are associated with completed print jobs.
- **Cricut & Sizzix Machines:** die-cutting equipment designed for scrapbooking and various projects for cutting paper, felt, vinyl, fabrics, etc.
- **Sewing Machines:** three (3) machines available for public use.
- **Tool Kits:** includes standard tools and kits for jewelry.

This is a sampling of items the public may use; however, it does require the completion of the Creation Station Orientation Course. This one-time class is offered several times a month or you may call to see about scheduling special sessions. Two additional classes include the Tinker CAD Design Course for learning to create projects for the 3D Printer, and a Cricut Design Space Course to learn how to load/unload materials on the machine.

We encourage everyone to check out The Creation Station at your library. If you have questions, are interested in scheduling a tour, need training or classes for your group or organization, then we encourage you to call us at 325-676-6025. Make the most out of this incredible new service at your library and see what you'll be able to create!

Welcoming New Librarians

The year brought new faces to our professional staff and we welcomed three librarians to the team, each excited to add their skills to the library system.

- **ELLENE CUDD | Children's Department**
Main Library
- **ALLISON HARVEY | Children's Department**
South Branch Library
- **MARIANNE VADNEY | Teen & Adult Services**
Mockingbird Branch Library

If you happen to see them out and about, be sure to say hello. They're working on some exciting new programming.

Unique & New Services

Library staff develops new programming on a regular basis. Designed to meet the existing needs and interests of patrons, we invite you to learn about a few of the new services. If you have suggestions on programming you'd like to see, be sure to let us know on your next visit.

- **Genealogy Lock-Ins:** specialized research sessions for local genealogy enthusiasts, which allows staff to introduce guests to the library's collections and resources.
- **TECH Time:** weekly instructional sessions on the use of devices, troubleshooting tech-related issues, and more. Each session offers a new experience tailored for those who attend.
- **Job Time: Application Assistance:** weekly event aiding job seekers with looking/applying for jobs, interviewing, and resume assistance.
- **Who I Could Be! Series:** career series for youth connecting them with local professionals to learn about their jobs.
- **Mockingbird Nights:** a series of activity sessions aimed at younger adults ages 18+, with emphasis on post high school to college aged people.
- **Grandparent & Me Craft Time:** craft sessions to promote intergenerational bonding between grandparents and grandchildren.

Message from Tremain Jackson, Technology/Social Media Manager

The Technology Department began in the Spring of 2017 to promote the use of technology and to increase the library's presence in the community both online and in print. Along with Multimedia Marketing Specialist Jessica Reyes, much of our work is notably seen through a host of digital and media outlets. Our goal is to promote library programming and services through graphics, video production, website development, social media marketing, and more to keep the community informed about what the library offers.

Year one has been amazing with enhanced and new services being offered through the library. Take a look at a few below:

- **TECH Time Series:** popular service assisting the public with tech-related questions; hosted on a weekly basis at both the Main and South Branch locations.
- **Dynamic Infographics & Marketing Tools:** enhanced graphics for promoting library programming & services on social media, the website, and print.
- **Video Productions:** increased filming of library events and programming for online viewing and use on the Abilene Television Network (Suddenlink Channel 2).
- **Original Video Programming:** providing staff-led library shows including promotional videos, craft shows, workshops, special events, and more.
- **Technology Plan:** constructing a 5-year plan for the direction of the technology needs for the library and community as we look to the future.

This is but a sampling of the new areas your library is working in, and this department has plans to seek out new avenues to get the library's message shared with all of our service population. With advanced knowledge in technology & software, Adobe products, web design, and video editing; coupled with a willingness to instruct others on the use of technology, as well as a drive to continually expand upon our current skill set, this department has a bright future.

The sky is the limit as to what you can expect to see from us. Feel free to reach out to us through the library's website and various social media outlets. We're always on hand to assist you and welcome your input when it comes to your technology needs!



Community Partnerships

We value our ties to the community, and actively seek out partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and agencies. Through such ties we have been afforded with the means to enhance services, offer new programs, and form mutually beneficial relationships. Below is a look at many of our partnerships over the past year. Feel free to reach out to us if you would like to see how we can help each other.

- Abilene Cultural Affairs Council
- Abilene & Wylie Independent School District
- Abilene Kennel Club
- Center for Contemporary Arts
- Chick-fil-A (Mall of Abilene Location)
- Dyess Air Force Base
- Hispanic Business Council
- International Rescue Committee
- KTAB 4U & KRBC
- Mall of Abilene
- Military Child Education Coalition
- National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature
- Tail Waggin' Tutors
- Team Chip Tae Kwon Do Center
- West Texas Genealogical Society
- Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas
- Young Audiences of Abilene

Plus many more. See what a partnership with the library can do for you!



MESSAGE FROM MARIE NOE, CUSTOMER SERVICES MANAGER

The Main Library continues to adapt and modify its layout to better serve patrons. The popularity of DVDs and Blu-rays has not slowed down, and our video section has seen big growth. Patrons are also enjoying the new “Hot Picks” collection which features bestsellers and popular titles.

Our Abilene Public Library is AWESOME! With three locations and family activities at each, there is always something to do. I love the summer reading program, the storytimes, the Young Audiences productions and the wide variety of books to read.

- Karen Williams Johnson -

The Children’s Department has continued with their wonderful programming. Toddler Time has proven to be very popular, offering kids the opportunity to dance, sing, and listen to great stories. The Baby Steps and Lapsit programs continue to offer our youngest patrons a fun introduction to books and reading.

The children’s area has seen a wonderful physical transformation. Once bare walls now give rise to a forest of painted trees in shades of purple and green.

Staff has also re-arranged the puzzle area to make it safer for kids to explore. This also includes setting out creative projects on the tables in the children’s area where kids can always find a coloring page, quick craft, or some other project to keep them busy.

We’ve also added a new collection of educational backpacks with themes and topics including colors, the alphabet, counting, and many others. Each comes with supporting content including puzzles, games, and a resource binder designed for families to engage in literacy activities in their homes.

The library continues to partner with the NCCIL, the Center for Contemporary Arts, the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council, and other organizations in presenting programs. The annual CALF festival was a big draw as drama students from Abilene Christian University presented a radio broadcast version of “Stuart Little” in the library auditorium.

Teens have had fun monthly after hours programs, where activities have included Fandom Wars, Dystopia parties, as well as game and movie nights.



Perhaps the most exciting news of the last year is the arrival of children’s librarian, Ellene Cudd. She hit the ground running and is already looking at some great new ideas including her new Coding Club for youth. We look forward to wonderful new offerings in the coming year.

Message from Janis C. Test, Information Services Manager

Information Services staff has had many changes this year with colleagues retiring, moving on to bigger and better jobs, and reconfiguring both space and duties in an effort to better serve the public. We have begun the process of moving our computer lab to a spot for better access for both staff and patrons, our wireless access continues to be very popular for mobile users, and a new charging station makes it easier for patrons to keep their devices working while they read, use a PC, or do research.



We have begun hosting regular “Genealogy Lock-In” programs after hours for adults and local genealogy enthusiasts. They have proven to be very helpful, and highlight two collections we are quite proud of, our Genealogy and Texas Collections. Information Services staff often assists researchers looking for their family histories and others looking at Abilene history. One author, after being directed to us while looking for background information about what Abilene was like on the Fourth of July in 1976, was very happy with what we found for her. She said “You. Are. AMAZING! Thank you SO much for this – it’s exactly the kind of detail that I was hoping for!”

- **153 Adult programs with 2,954 attendees**
- **527 Books-On-Wheels Participants**
- **45 Exams proctored**
- **2,365 People helped through the Tax Aide program**

Other programs included our popular Tax Aide location with the Association of American Retired Persons, crafting programs, a musician’s workshop for aspiring songwriters, the Cover-to-Cover Book Club, health-related programs, and many others.

Message from Janet Bailey, Technical Services Manager

Technical Services staff has been busy this year with interlibrary loan, acquisition of new materials, Top Picks, working with other library partners & volunteers, and writing grants. Staff has also worked weekly at the South Branch Library to update and refresh that collection, now in a new location in the Mall of Abilene.

This year patrons requested **4,703** interlibrary loan books and we lent **2,734** items to libraries across the world for a grand total of **7,709** transactions. With our efforts, we were able to secure a reimbursement for the City of Abilene for approximately \$12,000 from the Texas State Library Institute of Museum & Library Services grant. This program enables patrons to get older materials, which our library does not own, within an average of 10 days.

The library provides many different formats to accommodate the reading, viewing, and listening needs of all people. This includes a digital leisure library containing over **613,170** items, of which **173,195** items circulated surpassing last year by 27,000 circulations. Digital items accounted for 22% of all materials circulated, with only children’s books and DVDs ranking higher for percentage of checkouts. We are seeing a digital shift in our readership, but we equally provide for our patrons who still like the feel of a real book, which remain as circulating more than our digital collection.

In this fiscal year, Technical Services wrote a \$4,000 grant that purchased three computers, a training table, and a mobile 46” monitor for training purposes. They are housed in the Information Services department and are available for small groups to use for educational purposes in our new Study Room. Feel free to visit the library and book the room anytime, first-come, first-served.

In May, we kicked off a new service for the public called Top Picks. It has proven to be a popular addition. This new collection consists of purchasing two sets of bestselling novels by popular authors when they are released. Previously, our bestsellers all went to fulfill holds for the first 4-6 weeks of their release and did not reach the browsing shelves for other patrons to discover until they ceased to be bestsellers. Now we have books that fulfill patron holds, but also Top Picks that patrons can discover quickly upon their release. This collection operates on a first-come, first-served basis and can only be checked out for 7-days. Ask about Top Picks at your local library.



LIBRARY

MESSAGE FROM ALYSSA CROW, SOUTH BRANCH MANAGER

As South Branch's first year in our new location in the Mall of Abilene, FY 2017 was absolutely fantastic. Our new and larger space gave us the opportunity to offer expanded programming and new services to our patrons. We have received an overwhelming amount of support from the community and I would like to thank everyone who came out to see the new library, checkout materials, and attend programming. We've had 270,923 people visit the library this year alone, which is more than half of the total visits between all three locations. That's a big leap from 91,000 visits the previous year and an increase in visits by 197%.

Coloring Club for adults, which then led to the Family Coloring Club for kids and parents, based on steady attendance rates from guests.

We still have programs that take over the whole library; however, now we have more space to spread out. Such included the May 4th Star Wars program during Lib-Con and our Summer Reading Club, which had the largest attendance yet for South Branch. We had some very successful program series this past summer including Disney Flix & Crafts, Summer STEM Challenges, and the Who I Could Be! career series for youth. This final event was so popular that it will be offered year-round by inviting professionals into the library to discuss their careers.

I would like to thank everyone who visited our new space, and if you haven't, now is the time to stop by and see what the future holds because we have some pretty big plans in the works! We're only getting started, and with the effort of my wonderful staff, as well as the community's support, the South Branch library will be better than ever!



Due to our larger space, we could now expand weekly programming for kids of all ages with Baby Steps, Lapsit, and Toddler Time for younger kids. We have Preschool Storytime for kids ages 3-6 and Stories & More for school-aged youth. We also debuted a new program called Music & Movement, which introduced structured learning through music, rhythm, and rhyme. We added the super popular

"Love the new library!!! Closer to my area and the staff are all very sweet and ready to help out with any questions you may have!!! Lots of room to sit and read, and tables to work at as well. Couldn't have hoped for better!"

- STEFANIE LEAL -



MESSAGE FROM ANNE ELLIS, MOCKINGBIRD BRANCH MANAGER

New and exciting things came about this past year. 2017 saw the addition of Teen Librarian Marianne Vadney, as well as a list of new and special-interest programs.



Children's Librarian Darla Casella is the creative genius behind our "Play & Learn" for toddlers and "Rhythm & Rhyme" for preschoolers. "Play & Learn" is a motor movement class for children ages 1-3. Activity stations are located around the room, then parents and toddlers explore, see, and touch all kinds of objects from everyday life. It offers a truly immersive and interactive family experience at your library.

"Rhythm & Rhyme" is a music-based movement class for children ages 3-6. Participants are given sound shakers and encouraged to shake along to songs. For young children, repetition and rhythm are key components of early literacy and a proven way to get a head start in the reading process.

Teen events expanded thanks to the efforts of Marianne Vadney. Programming includes

"Mockingbird Nights" for adults ages 18+ who are recent high school or college graduates, as well as a "Teen Virtual Book Club" designed as an online club for middle and high school students via the GoodReads website. We've also developed several partnerships across the city to promote our activities including Abilene High School, Cooper High School, the Hardin-Simmons University Library, the McMurry University Library, the Texas State Technical College Library, the Cisco Junior College Library, and the student services office of Abilene Christian University.

We received a Texas Book Festival Grant from the Texas State Library. Branch Manager Anne Ellis used these funds to create a Career & Professional Development book collection for adult users. Our new book collection has titles encompassing Microsoft Office applications, public speaking, information regarding career paths, and more.

I love our libraries and they are so awesome. They have so much to do for families. Thanks for all you do for the community Abilene Public Library!

- KRYSTLE RICKERT -

These resources are coupled with hands on training every Wednesday in "Job Time: Application Assistance." Each week library staff work in small groups with class participants and help them to create resumes and apply for jobs online.

LIB-CON TURNED 4-YEARS-OLD...AND STILL GROWING!

Lib-Con celebrated its 4th year with all branch library locations participating in conducting 28 programs, attended by 1,146 guests, in an explosive week from May 1-6, 2017.

While offering popular programming from last year, 2017 saw a lineup of new activities including a Jedi Academy, panel sessions on cosplaying, a nerdy speed dating session, Dungeons & Dragons gaming, and more. Two special events featured incredible guest speakers including manga creator, author, and illustrator Mark Crilley of Detroit, MI (*in partnership with the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature*) and Terri Doty (Dallas, TX), a voice actress known for her work with Funimation and Sentai Filmworks.



Everything led to an explosive Saturday at the Main Library with more than 1,600 guests coming out to join us for a host of activities from opening to close. Activities included photo booth stations, LARP demonstrations, craft stations, local vendor booths, and free comic books. This all led to the ever-so-popular Cosplay Contest, an event that never fails to fill the auditorium with participants and audience members.

We're thankful to all the fans of anime, manga, comics, and more who came out to support this special series. Although it's over, library staff is hard at work planning 2018's lineup and we will have even more changes to help keep each year fresh and fun for guests. For more information about Lib-Con, visit our website online at www.abilenetx.com/apl/LibCon.



SUMMER READING CLUB STATS

- **4,664** Kids' Reading Club Participants
- **194** Kids' Programs
- **11,790** Kids' Program Attendance
- **716** Teen Reading Club Participants
- **35** Teen Programs
- **1,106** Teen Program Attendance
- **2,295** Adult Reading Club Participants
- **68** Adult Programs
- **685** Adult Program Attendance

SUMMER OF BUILDING COMMUNITIES

The Abilene Public Library was full of excitement and fun this past summer. The theme for the Summer Reading Clubs was "Build a Better World" and we did just that, one program at a time.

The library remains one of the highly-utilized community resources when it comes to cost-effective entertainment for all ages, and this summer did not disappoint. Highlights included dynamic programming across all three locations including the 21st year of Young Audiences performances, weekly Disney Flix & Crafts sessions, Read to a Dog Day opportunities, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) Challenges, Who I Could Be summer career series, and Build a Better World activity sessions. Children's staff never fail when it comes to putting together an incredible summer for kids and families.

Teen programming including many fun craft sessions, movie showings, and monthly after hours programming covering a wide range of social activities. Finally, adult programming thrived with TECH Time sessions, Grandparent & Me Craft days, book clubs, and more.

We couldn't be more pleased to serve a community that remains active in using their local public libraries each summer, as well as throughout the year. Be sure to drop in and take advantage of our incredible services.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY & ADVISORY BOARD

ABILENE PUBLIC LIBRARY 11

The Friends of the Library continues to thrive as a hardworking volunteer group. Their commitment to aiding the library in our goals to offer the community with the best in services continues to be at the forefront of who they are.

Although much of FY2016 was dedicated towards leading the charge to the development of the South Branch Library's transition to the Mall of Abilene, FY2017 saw that project come to fruition on Saturday, November 19, 2016 as the new branch location opened its doors to the community. With the Friend's commitment of \$540,000, and active fundraising, this location became a reality with minimal to taxpayers.

Without missing a beat, this group continued with their service commitment through organizing its success activities including the Spring Texas Author Series, the Annual Book Sale (raising more than \$60,000), and the West Texas Book Festival featuring a new three-day format.

Additional contributions to the library included:

- Staff training & funds to attend the Texas Library Association's Annual Conference for development.
- Financial Support for the annual Summer Reading Clubs, including raffle prizes for teens & adults.
- New carpeting for the auditorium and furniture to update staff lounge areas.
- New and improved sound system for the auditorium for programming, workshops, and presentations.
- Countless volunteer hours at special events, projects, and fundraising opportunities.
- Spearheading the 2017 Ricki Brown Librarian of the Year Award recognizing an Abilene librarian for his/her outstanding leadership and service.
- And Much More!

If you wish to become a member, feel free to visit their website online at

www.abilenetx.com/apl/Friends



2017 ABILENE PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD

This board serves as the liaison between Library Administration and City Council. Members work to help determine the financial needs of the library system, advises library administration concerning policies affecting the public, and helps to guide direction of the library in the future. We're thankful to the great men and women who actively serve.

DENNIS REGAN, CHAIR

Debbie Lillick, Vice-Chair
Carrie Casada

Dennis Billie
Stan Chapman

Clint Buck
Tiffany Fink

Rob Carleton
Ginna Sadler

Michael Carrisalez
Joe Specht

LIBRARY LOCATIONS & HOURS OF OPERATION



Main Library

202 Cedar St.

Abilene TX, 79601

PH: 325-677-2474

Hours of Operation

Mon, Tues, Thurs	9am - 9pm
Wed, Fri, Sat	9am - 6pm
Sun	Closed

South Branch Library

4310 Buffalo Gap Rd.

Abilene TX, 79606

PH: 325-698-7565

Hours of Operation

Mon, Tues, Thurs	10am - 9pm
Wed, Fri, Sat	10am - 6pm
Sun	1pm - 6pm

Mockingbird Branch Library

1326 N. Mockingbird

Abilene TX, 79603

PH: 325-437-7323

Hours of Operation

Mon, Tues, Thurs	9am - 9pm
Wed, Fri, Sat	9am - 6pm
Sun	Closed

The mission of the Abilene Public Library is to provide materials, services, and programs to help community residents obtain information which meets their personal, educational, professional, and recreational needs.

Visit us at www.abilenetx.com/apl

